Farm and Ranch Scale

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Chapter 7 in *The Handbook* details habitat planning at the scale of a farm or ranch. This case study focused on watershed scale planning for wildlife habitat conservation. However, as mentioned earlier, it is on the farm and ranch that project plans are implemented and managed as habitat. A brief discussion of some NRCS conservation practices that can be applied at the farm, ranch, and community open-space scale projects in the Henry's Fork study area follows.

Many NRCS conservation practices afford the opportunity to extend the habitat and connectivity benefits of corridors into the agricultural and open-space matrix. These conservation practices are typically located in upland settings, ideally situated to reduce soil erosion and intercept pollutants before they reach natural corridors, wetlands, or streams. Conservation practices can be grouped into either grass/forb or woody species-dominated structure. When installed, these practices are lineal in nature and function as introduced corridors in the landscape as illustrated below.

Introduced Grass/Forb Corridors
- Field borders (1)
- Field buffers
- Filter strip
- Conservation cover pasture/hayland planting
- Grassed terraces (4)
- Vegetated ditches/canals
- Grassed waterways (5)
- Grass/legume rotation

Introduced Woody Corridors
- Riparian forest buffer (3)
- Hedgerows
- Windbreaks (2)
- Shelterbelts
- Tree and shrub planting

Technical advice and funding is available to farmers, ranchers, and communities who choose to participate in developing a conservation plan for their property. Often these plans include introduced corridors. Typically, farmers and ranchers, in cooperation with NRCS personnel, select and install conservation practices that reduce soil erosion and improve water quality. Introduced corridors generally constitute a small portion of the total acreage in agricultural regions; however, if properly located and designed, their value to wildlife far exceeds that of adjacent cropland. A detailed discussion of how to increase the habitat value of conservation corridors can be found in *The Handbook*.

The habitat benefits of introduced corridors are expanded significantly when they are connected to natural patches and corridors managed for wildlife conservation. Increased use of conservation practices in the Henry's Fork Agricultural Corridor would conserve soil and water resources and enhance wildlife habitat in the watershed. Many of these practices were used in the previously described Conservation Corridors Alternative. NRCS personnel in Fremont and Madison Counties are actively involved in resource conservation in the watershed and welcome the opportunity to share their technical expertise. Examples are illustrated below.

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